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DE RUEHTG #0537/01 1870038  
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FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0030  
INFO RUEHWH/WESTERN HEMISPHERIC AFFAIRS DIPL POSTS IMMEDIATE  
RUEHUB/USINT HAVANA IMMEDIATE 0204  
RUEAHND/CDRJTFB SOTO CANO HO IMMEDIATE  
RUMIAAA/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL IMMEDIATE  
RUMIAAA/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL//CINC/POLAD// IMMEDIATE  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
RUEAHND/COMJTF-B SOTO CANO HO IMMEDIATE  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE  
RUEIDN/DNI WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE  
RUMIAAA/HQ USSOUTHCOM J3 MIAMI FL IMMEDIATE  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE 1071  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
RUMIAAA/USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 TEGUCIGALPA 000537

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA/CEN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [CASC](#) [MARR](#) [KDEM](#) [PHUM](#) [HO](#)

SUBJECT: HONDURAN COUP SITREP #11 (UNCLASSIFIED) 07/05/09  
AS OF 1600 LOCAL (1800 EDT)

REF: A. TEGUCIGALPA 535

[1](#)B. STATE 69221

[1](#)C. TEGUCIGALPA 533

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Protest Focused on Anticipated Zelaya Return  
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[1](#)1. (U) Overnight, the pro-Zelaya protesters from outside Tegucigalpa remained camped out at the Pedagogical University in the capital. Their Sunday demonstration began there, and grew to a crowd of 5,000 by 11:00 local (13:00 EDT), when they began to march to Toncontin International Airport. Chants of "Mel arrives at 12:30 and we'll be there to meet him" rolled through the crowd. By 13:00 local, the crowd had reached the airport and grown to approximately 12,000 to 15,000 and were demanding to be allowed into the premises. Anticipating Zelaya's arrival at approximately 16:00 local, some members of the group attempted to enter the south end of the runway, and security forces deployed tear gas to stop them. Sources at the scene report three protesters were killed by security forces. A plane carrying President Zelaya flew over Toncontin Airport, but did not attempt to land, as military vehicles were deployed on the runway. As of 1830, the runway is clear of protesters, and soldiers remain on the tarmac, but demonstrators, numbers are estimated at at least 20,000. They are predicted to be spending the night at the airport, which is now closed until further notice. No pro-coup demonstration has materialized today as of 18:30 local. There have been no reports of further disruptions at land border crossings today.

[1](#)2. (U) Honduran police (HNP) confirm two unidentified men on a motorcycle broke a window and threw a grenade into the TV Channel 11 offices Saturday night. The grenade exploded, but the station did not cease broadcast and no injuries were reported.

[1](#)3. (SBU) The curfew start time was moved to 18:30, through

05:00 (20:30 to 07:00 EDT) Monday morning. HNP report making 18 arrests nationwide for curfew violations overnight.

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Political Developments; Public Opinion  
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¶4. (U) The Roman Catholic Archbishop of Honduras, Cardinal Oscar Andres Rodriguez, in a televised "cadena" repeated multiple times Saturday, expressed a firmly pro-coup message and implored President Zelaya not to return, for the good of the country. At noon local today, The Reverend Oswaldo Canales, head of Honduras' main evangelical coalition CEH called for peace and reconciliation of all sides, noting that "we are all sinners" on a televised "cadena."

¶5. (SBU) Post is adhering to Washington guidance regarding a no-contact policy (Ref B) with the Micheletti regime, while continuing to seek back-channel progress through non-regime contacts. We will report these discussions in greater detail through classified channels (Ref C).

¶6. (U) At approximately 14:00 local, de facto President Micheletti gave a televised press conference, accompanied by de facto regime's Foreign Minister Enrique Ortez Colindres, Vice Foreign Minister Maria Alvarado and former Callejas Administration Foreign Minister Carlos Lopez Contreras, who is serving as an advisor to the regime. Micheletti stated concern over unconfirmed reports that Nicaraguan troops were amassing at the border, but then backed down from his claims when pressed by reporters for evidence. He called on Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega and Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, however, to respect Honduran sovereignty. Reporters also challenged Micheletti on his claim that he was

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"legitimately elected," which Lopez explained meant he had been elected by Congress, itself elected by the Honduran people.

¶7. (U) Alvarado announced that the de facto government would set up a working-level delegation to engage in dialogue with the OAS. One reporter asked how, if Micheletti reaffirmed that the ouster of Zelaya was irreversible and he did not recognize the OAS resolution suspending Honduras, the diplomatic commission could accomplish anything. Lopez responded that they did have fundamental differences with the OAS, but that they were seeking an open dialogue to address those differences.

¶8. (SBU) While all indications are that the coup continues to have strong popular support, even with rural and poorer citizens, Post has seen cracks in the resolve of the political class with regard to the legality of the coup and the legitimacy of the Micheletti regime. In addition to public statements by members of Congress reported previously (Ref A and others), media are now reporting the Public Ministry is investigating whether the military overstepped its bounds by removing Zelaya from the country and the Constitutional Hall of the Supreme Court, the same five-magistrate panel that had ruled Zelaya's poll was illegal, has now asked the Armed Forces to explain the circumstances that motivated them to remove Zelaya from the country and agreed to hear arguments about the constitutionality of the curfew imposed by the de facto regime.

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Infrastructure and Communications  
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¶9. (U) While Toncontin International Airport was officially open today, American, Delta and TACA airlines canceled their flights. Continental's flight arrived and departed roughly on time. Toncontin is now closed until further notice. San Pedro Sula airport remains open for

international flights, and American, Continental and Delta airlines continue to operate flights as usual to that destination. Pro-Zelaya television Channel 36 returned to the air Saturday evening.

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Consular and Embassy Operations  
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¶10. (U) Embassy employees were instructed to remain in their homes for the day in anticipation of increased protests, but by 18:00, the only unrest remained at the airport. The Ambassador chaired a meeting of the EAC, which determined to keep visa and non-essential ACS services closed on Monday, July 6. A liberal leave policy will be in effect for Embassy staff. The EAC also agreed to review civil unrest tripwires to aid in determining the need to request authorized departure.  
LLORENS